
Case Study: Progressive County Department of Children Services

Overview

For the past several months, the Progressive County Department of Children's Services (PCDCS) has been engaged in a strategic planning process, and the leadership team has come to recognize the critical role the workforce will play in the agency's ability to achieve its strategic outcomes. As part of the strategic plan, PCDCS will be implementing the Family to Family (F2F) model next year. The new model has implications for both the number of frontline workers needed to do the job and the competencies that the workers must possess.

The leadership team has made the decision that workforce planning is critical to their overall strategic planning effort, and they have appointed a Workforce Planning Team (WPT), chaired by the Human Resources Director. The WPT is currently conducting the [Supply/Demand Analysis](#) and [Gap Analysis](#).

One of the WPT's major concerns is whether the current workforce will be able to adapt to the new service delivery model. Some of their Child Welfare Caseworkers are a poor fit for the current job, morale has been low, and turnover has been high. They are very concerned about how well the staff will be able to adapt to the new model.

Their analysis will include:

- A Competency Assessment to determine what competencies will be needed under the new F2F model.
- A Staffing Assessment to determine the numbers of staff needed under the new F2F model.
- Identifying the gaps between the competencies needed and those currently possessed by staff, and gaps between current and future staffing levels.

Profile: Progressive County Department of Children Services

- **Workforce Planning Initiative:** Family to Family
- **Workforce Planning Time Period:** 2 years
- **Workforce Concerns:** poor job fit, low morale, high turnover, adapting to new delivery model
- **Targeted Job Classification:** Child Welfare Caseworker
- **Number of Budgeted Child Welfare Caseworkers:** 100
- **Number of Current Vacancies:** 5
- **Total Cases:** 2,200
- **Caseload Ratio:** 22:1 for the past few years
- **Projected Caseload Growth:** 220 next year
- **Budgetary Goal:** 10 additional positions in next year's budget
- **Program Goal:** reduce caseload ratio to 18:1

Demand Analysis: Competency Assessment

PCDCS decided to begin their Demand Analysis by looking at the competencies staff will need to perform successfully under the new model. They selected a focus group from their best frontline supervisors and Child Welfare Caseworkers. The focus group facilitator used the following instructions and rating scale to complete the Competency Assessment:

Competency Rating Instructions:

Competencies are: the knowledge, skill, behaviors, personal attributes, or other characteristics associated with or predictive of superior job performance.

For each of the listed competencies, and in the appropriate column, indicate the degree to which the competency is:

- **Currently possessed** by the employees in the classification,
- **Currently required** to accomplish the work of the classification,
- **Will be required in the future** based upon the organization's strategic plan or changing business requirements.

Use the **Competency Rating Scale:**

- 0 – Competency is Not Required
- 1 – Basic Level of Competency
- 2 – Intermediate Level of Competency
- 3 – Advanced Level of Competency

The focus group reached consensus on the Competency Assessment (see the [Competency Menu Rating Form](#) on the next page). The competencies they expected would be important under the F2F model are shown in the last column, "Required in Future."

Competency Menu Rating Form

Competency	Competency Definition	Currently Possessed	Currently Required	Required in Future
Decision Making/Problem Solving	Breaks down problems into components and recognizes interrelationships; makes sound, well-informed, and objective decisions. Compares data, information, and input from a variety of sources to draw conclusions; takes action that is consistent with available facts, constraints, and probable consequences.	2	3	3
Communication	Clearly conveys and receives information and ideas through a variety of media to individuals or groups in a manner that engages the listener, helps them understand and retain the message, and invites response and feedback. Keeps others informed as appropriate. Demonstrates good written, oral, and listening skills	1	3	3
Planning and Organizing (non-supervisory competency: supervisors use Managing Work)	Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resources requirements; determines necessary sequence of activities needed to achieve goals.	2	3	3
Adaptability (Do not use with Facilitating Change)	Adapts well to changes in assignments and priorities; adapts behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles; approaches change positively and adjusts behaviors accordingly.	1	3	3
Conflict Management	Uses appropriate interpersonal styles and techniques to reduce tension and/or conflict between two or more people; able to size up situations quickly; able to identify common interests; facilitates resolution.	3	3	3
Collaboration	Builds constructive working relationships with clients/customers, other work units, community organizations and others to meet mutual goals and objectives. Behaves professionally and supportively when working with individuals from a variety of ethnic, social and educational backgrounds.	1	2	3

Competency	Competency Definition	Currently Possessed	Currently Required	Required in Future
Customer/Client Focus	Makes customers/clients and their needs a primary focus of one's actions; shows interest in and understanding of the needs and expectations of internal and external customers (including direct reports); gains customer trust and respect; meets or exceeds customer expectations	2	3	3
Work Standards	Sets high standards and well-defined, realistic goals for one's self; displays a high level of effort and commitment towards completing assignments in a timely manner; works with minimal supervisor; is motivated to achieve.	3	3	3
Initiative	Takes action without being asked or required to; achieves goals beyond job requirements; being proactive; taking prompt action to accomplish objectives.	2	2	3
Teamwork (non-supervisory competency: supervisors use Team Leadership)	Participates as an active and contributing member of a team to achieve team goals. Works cooperatively with other team members, involves others, shares information as appropriate, and shares credit for team accomplishments.	2	2	3
Technical/ Professional Knowledge and Skills	Possesses, acquires, and maintains the technical/professional expertise required to do the job effectively and to create client/customer solutions. Technical/professional expertise is demonstrated through problem solving, applying professional judgment, and competent performance.	3	3	3

[Demand Analysis: Staffing Assessment](#)

The WPT has also started gathering data for the Staffing Assessment portion of the Demand Analysis. The County's budget process determines the available dollars for staffing more than a year in advance, and the budget is set by the County Board. Although PCDCS realizes that the new program initiative must be implemented within existing resources, they must begin planning now for the budget that will go into effect during the fiscal year after next.

PCDCS has already completed a [SWOT Analysis](#), where they collected the following information:

- Currently, PDCDS serves approximately 2,200 cases, and employs 100 Child Welfare Caseworkers, having maintained a caseload ratio of 22:1 for the past few years.
- Earlier in the planning process, PCDCS decided they will need to create 5 new Team Decision-Making Facilitator positions when they implement the F2F program
- The Team Decision-Making Facilitator positions will have to come out of their allocation of the 100 Child Welfare Caseworkers.
- The State Legislature will require all counties to contract for “transporter services” for children in foster care.
- The dollars to pay for that contract will have to come from the line item that funds the Caseworker positions – further reducing the number of Caseworkers.
- PCDCS has projected a caseload growth of 220 cases over the coming year, and the County Board took that into account when setting next year’s budget.
- They intended to maintain the 22:1 caseload ratio by including funding for 10 additional positions in next year’s budget.
- PCDCS administrators, along with a number of key supporters, have already begun a campaign to convince the County Board that the caseload ratio should be reduced to 18:1 for the next budget cycle. Because of the publicity surrounding two recent high-profile cases, the Board appears to be very supportive of the proposal.

Based on this information, the Human Resources Manager completed the [Workload Change Worksheet and the Workload Change Summary Worksheet](#), and shared them with the WPT.

Workload Change Worksheet

Classification: *Child Welfare Caseworker*

Description of Policy Change/New Initiative	Effective Date
<i>Implementation of Family to Family initiative</i>	<i>One year from now</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Firm or <input type="checkbox"/> Projected </div>
Likely Impact on Workload (e.g., increase/decrease in tasks, volume/quantity, response time)	
<i>The new F2F model will require us to establish 5 new Team Decision-Making Facilitator positions that will have to come out of the Child Welfare Caseworker allocation of budgeted positions. Next year's budget has already been passed by the Board, so an increase in staffing is not possible.</i>	
Anticipated Changes in Staffing	
Increase in FTEs: _____ positions	Projected Effective Date:
Decrease in FTEs: 5 positions	Projected Effective Date: <i>One Year from now</i>

Description of Mandated Regulatory Change	Effective Date
<i>The State legislature has required all counties to contract for "transporter" services to transport children to visitations, medical appointments, etc. We must use the funding from 3 caseworker positions to pay for the contract.</i>	<i>One year from now</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Firm or <input type="checkbox"/> Projected </div>
Likely Impact on Workload (e.g., increase/decrease in tasks, volume/quantity, response time)	
<i>We believe the workload of the caseworkers will be reduced because they will be relieved of the time-consuming burden of transporting children and supervising visitations.</i>	
Anticipated Changes in Staffing	
Increase in FTEs: _____ positions	Projected Effective Date:
Decrease in FTEs: 3 positions	Projected Effective Date: <i>One year from now</i>

Workload Change Worksheet

Classification: *Child Welfare Caseworker*

Description of Planned Growth/Expansion	Effective Date
<i>We expect our client caseload to increase by approximately 220 cases. The Board has authorized hiring 10 more workers to maintain the 22:1 caseload ratio.</i>	<i>One year from now</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Firm or <input type="checkbox"/> Projected
Likely Impact on Workload (e.g., increase/decrease in tasks, volume/quantity, response time)	
No change to workload	
Anticipated Changes in Staffing	
Increase in FTEs: 10 positions	Projected Effective Date: <i>One year from now</i>
Decrease in FTEs: _____ positions	Projected Effective Date:

Description of Other Factors Affecting Staffing	Effective Date
<i>We are proposing a change in the budget in the fiscal year after next. We are advocating for a reduction in the caseload from 22:1 to 18:1</i>	<i>One year from now</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Firm or <input type="checkbox"/> Projected
Likely Impact on Workload (e.g., increase/decrease in tasks, volume/quantity, response time)	
<i>We believe reducing the caseload ratio will have a significant impact on making workloads more manageable.</i>	
Anticipated Changes in Staffing	
Increase in FTEs: 33 positions	Projected Effective Date: <i>Two years from now</i>
Decrease in FTEs: _____ positions	Projected Effective Date:

Workload Change Summary Worksheet

Classification: *Child Welfare Caseworker*

Effective Date: *One year from now*

Workload Change Factors	Staffing Increase	Staffing Decrease
Policy Change/New Initiative		5
Mandated Regulatory Changes		3
Planned Growth/Expansion	10	
Other Factors Affecting Staffing		
TOTALS	10	8
Net Change	2	

Classification: *Child Welfare Caseworker*

Effective Date: *Two years from now*

Workload Change Factors	Staffing Increase	Staffing Decrease
Policy Change/New Initiative		
Mandated Regulatory Changes		
Planned Growth/Expansion		
Other Factors Affecting Staffing	33	
TOTALS	33	0
Net Change	33	

Supply Analysis – Staffing Assessment

The PCDCS has not kept detailed turnover reports in the past. However, they can use their HR data system to produce detailed reports showing employee departures from a job classification by reason (e.g., Retirement, Resignation, Promotion, etc). A HR analyst has developed a series of reports that show the number of departures, by departure reason, for each of the past three years. The analyst used that data to calculate the percentage of employees leaving the Child Welfare Caseworker classification for each of the past three years by departure code.

Using the [Attrition Projection Worksheets](#) below, the analyst estimated the number of employees projected to leave the Child Welfare Caseworker classification in each of the next two years. Columns 4 and 6 show the projected attrition based solely on the trend data:

Attrition Projection Worksheet

Classification: Child Welfare Caseworker								
Date: Now								
Column Numbers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Reason for Attrition	Average Percentage Attrition (Trend)	Current Number in Class	Projected Average Attrition	Attrition Adjustment (Year One)	Total Projected Attrition (Year One)	Attrition Adjustment (Year Two)	Total Projected Attrition (Year Two)	Total Projected Attrition (Both Years)
Retirements	0.0%	100	0	3	3	3	3	6
Resignations	15.0%	100	15	0	15	0	15	30
Terminations	2.0%	100	2	0	2	0	2	4
Promotions	1.0%	100	1	2	3	3	4	7
Demotions	1.0%	100	1	0	1	0	1	2
Transfers	0.0%	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0.0%	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Attrition/ Turnover	19.0%	100	19	5	24	6	25	49

The WPT also looked at a number of other reports that provided useful demographic data and other information about the workforce. It became very obvious that PCDCS has an aging workforce. Most notably, 7 of the 100 Child Welfare Caseworkers at PCDCS are currently eligible for retirement. Eight more becomes eligible during the next two years. Even more Casework Supervisors are eligible for retirement – of these fifteen frontline supervisors, six are eligible now, and five more become eligible during the next two years.

The HR Manager surveyed all of the retirement-eligible staff throughout the Department about the likelihood of retiring within the next three years. Based on the results, the WPT made adjustments to the trend analysis, as shown in columns 5 and 7 of the [Attrition Projection Worksheet](#). In the first-year projection, they adjusted the number of projected promotions based on the survey responses from supervisors (column 4). In the second year, they adjusted both the retirement and promotion-trend estimates based on the survey information (column 6).

Gap Analysis – Staffing Assessment

The PCDCS is using their Workforce Planning process to forecast their needs two years into the future. The [Gap Analysis: Staffing Assessment Template](#) shows their projections for the first year of their planning process:

- They have budgetary authorization to fill 100 Child Welfare Caseworker positions.
- Five of the positions are vacant – not unusual given their annual turnover rate.
- The increase of 2 positions comes from the [Workload Change Summary Worksheet](#).
- The projected attrition of 24 positions comes from the [Attrition Projection Worksheet](#).

The Gap Analysis shows that they need to add 31 employees during the course of the first year of the Workforce Planning process.

Gap Analysis: Staffing Assessment Template

Classification: Child Welfare Caseworker

Projected Date: Beginning One Year Out

Projected Required Staffing Level (*From Demand Analysis*)

Current staffing level in the target job classification

Date: _____ Now _____

95

Current Vacancies (+) / Overage (-) in target job classification

-

+5

+

And

And

Increase / Decrease in number of positions from current staffing level

-

+2

+

Required Staffing Level

=

(Current staffing level + or – projected changes)

102

Projected Internal Supply (*From Supply Analysis*)

Current staffing level in the target job classification

Date: _____ Now _____

95

Projected attrition

-

24

Internal Supply

=

(Current staffing level – outflow + inflow)

71

Required Staffing Level – Internal Supply = Gap

Projected Date *One Year Out*

31

The [Staffing Assessment Template](#) shows the team's projections for the second year of the Workforce Planning process:

- The current staffing level is 95 filled positions and 5 vacancies.
- They have 2 additional positions – a result of the net gain from the staffing adjustments intended to address the increasing client base.
- The increase of 33 positions comes from the [Workload Change Summary Worksheet](#) for the second year.
- These 33 positions should be included in the forecast because the County must gear up to fill them during the end of the second year, even though the budget to support them won't be available until the first day of the fiscal year that begins two years from now.
- From the [Attrition Projection Worksheet](#) for the second year, the first year's attrition is added to the second year's to obtain the projected 2-year attrition of 49 frontline workers.

The Gap Analysis shows that they need to add a total of 89 employees over the course of the full two years of the Workforce Planning process.

Gap Analysis: Staffing Assessment Template

Classification: Child Welfare Caseworker

Projected Date: Two Years Out

Projected Required Staffing Level (*From Demand Analysis*)

Current staffing level in the target job classification

Date: _____ Now _____

95

Current Vacancies (+) / Overage (-) in target job classification

-

+5

+

Staffing allocation changes from first year of planning process

-

+2

+

Increase / Decrease in number of positions from last years staffing level

-

+33

+

Required Staffing Level

(Current staffing level + or – projected changes)

=

135

Projected Internal Supply (*From Supply Analysis*)

Current staffing level in the target job classification

Date: _____ Now _____

95

Projected attrition

-

49

Internal Supply =

46

Required Staffing Level – Internal Supply = Gap

Projected Date: *Two Years Out*

89

The multi-year [Gap Analysis Summary](#) below shows that PCDCS must add 31 employees during the first year and 58 employees during the second year to “stay on track.”

Multi-Year Gap Analysis Summary

Classification: Child Welfare Caseworker

Dates: Now to Two Years Out

Two-Year Gap Dates: Now to Two Years Out		89
First-Year Gap Dates: Now to One Year Out	—	31
Second-Year Gap Dates: One year out to Two Years Out	=	58

The major issue identified in the Gap Analysis is that PCDCS will have 33 new positions that will become available all at once at the beginning of the fiscal year two years from now. Their Gap-Closing Strategies will need to begin well in advance if they intend to stay ahead of the curve. The Gap Analysis also makes it abundantly clear that continuously carrying 5 vacancies prevents them from operating at full capacity.

In summary, the Gap Analysis shows that PCDCS should:

- Make a concerted effort to fill the 5 vacancies they have been carrying along with the projected 2 to 4 vacancies that will result from attrition during the hiring process. They now recognize the importance of achieving full staffing before they can shift to the maintenance mode.
- Be prepared to hire about 2 caseworkers each month to cover the expected attrition of 21 employees during the first year.
- Be prepared to hire the 2 additional caseworkers that will become available with the new budget allocation recognizing the increased demand for services.
- Be prepared to hire approximately 2 caseworkers each month to cover the expected attrition of 23 employees during the second year.
- Be prepared to recruit and hire an additional 33 employees that will be authorized in the budget at the beginning of the fiscal year after next. They know this will be a huge challenge that will require considerable planning.

Gap Analysis – Competency Assessment

In reviewing the [Competency-Gap Analysis Worksheet](#) below, the Workforce Planning Team sees that gaps exist in eight of the competencies considered important for the Child Welfare Caseworker to possess under the Family to Family model. In fact, gaps exist in six of the eight same competency areas that are deemed to be critical to the job as the county currently expects it to be performed. Three of the competency areas, (*Communication, Adaptability, and Collaboration*) show two-point gaps between the competency levels currently possessed and needed for the future. The planning team sees this as a critical issue, particularly given plans to implement the new program model.

Competency-Gap Analysis Worksheet

Competency	Competency Definition	Current Gap	Future Gap
Decision Making/Problem Solving	Breaks down problems into components and recognizes interrelationships; makes sound, well-informed, and objective decisions. Compares data, information, and input from a variety of sources to draw conclusions; takes action that is consistent with available facts, constraints, and probable consequences.	1	1
Communication	Clearly conveys and receives information and ideas through a variety of media to individuals or groups in a manner that engages the listener, helps them understand and retain the message, and invites response and feedback. Keeps others informed as appropriate. Demonstrates good written, oral, and listening skills	2	2
Planning and Organizing (non-supervisory competency: supervisors use Managing Work)	Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resources requirements; determines necessary sequence of activities needed to achieve goals.	1	1
Adaptability (Do not use with Facilitating Change)	Adapts well to changes in assignments and priorities; adapts behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles; approaches change positively and adjusts behaviors accordingly.	2	2
Conflict Management	Uses appropriate interpersonal styles and techniques to reduce tension and/or conflict between two or more people; able to size up situations quickly; able to identify common interests; facilitates resolution.		
Collaboration	Builds constructive working relationships with clients/customers, other work units, community organizations and others to meet mutual goals and objectives. Behaves professionally and supportively when working with individuals from a variety of ethnic, social and educational backgrounds.	1	2

Competency	Competency Definition	Current Gap	Future Gap
Customer/Client Focus	Makes customers/clients and their needs a primary focus of one's actions; shows interest in and understanding of the needs and expectations of internal and external customers (including direct reports); gains customer trust and respect; meets or exceeds customer expectations	1	1
Work Standards	Sets high standards and well-defined, realistic goals for one's self; displays a high level of effort and commitment towards completing assignments in a timely manner; works with minimal supervisor; is motivated to achieve.		
Initiative	Takes action without being asked or required to; achieves goals beyond job requirements; being proactive; taking prompt action to accomplish objectives.		1
Teamwork (non-supervisory competency: supervisors use Team Leadership)	Participates as an active and contributing member of a team to achieve team goals. Works cooperatively with other team members, involves others, shares information as appropriate, and shares credit for team accomplishments.		1
Technical/ Professional Knowledge and Skills	Possesses, acquires, and maintains the technical/professional expertise required to do the job effectively and to create client/customer solutions. Technical/professional expertise is demonstrated through problem solving, applying professional judgment, and competent performance.		

The WPT has gathered a wealth of information, thoroughly analyzed workforce data, and shared their findings with the leadership team. PCDCS is well prepared to begin the process of identifying the Gap-Closing strategies that will help them meet tomorrow's challenges.